

# WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,  
and workers in the District of Columbia*

*Friday, August 20, 2004*

## PHOTO RADAR SPEEDING REDUCTION PROGRAM MARKS THREE-YEAR MILESTONE

Three years ago, in response to residents' concerns about chronic speeding, the MPDC unveiled its photo radar speeding reduction program. Three years later, the automated enforcement program has not completely eliminated the problem of speeding, but it has put a major dent in speeding on those roadways monitored by photo radar, according to the latest data. In fact, fewer motorists are speeding aggressively today than at any time in the past three years. In July 2004, just 4.4 percent of all vehicles monitored by photo radar were found to be traveling above the threshold speed established for the program. That is the lowest rate of aggressive speeding since the automated traffic safety program began. And it is substantially lower than the aggressive speeding rate of 31 percent in July 2001 (the initial warning period for the program). In addition to reducing the rate of aggressive speeding, the program has helped to bring down the average speeds of all vehicles on all types DC roadways. On streets with a 25-mph speed limit, for example, the average speed of all vehicles monitored by photo radar was just 26.6 mph in July 2004 - down from 35.5 mph in July 2001. In 50-mph zones, the average motorist was actually traveling below the speed limit (44.9 mph) during July 2004; that compares with an average speed of almost 8 mph above the speed limit (57.7 mph) in July 2001. During the first three years of operation, just over 1 million Notices of Infraction were mailed and approximately 746,000 were paid, resulting in fines of approximately \$56.1 million. This level of consistent traffic enforcement has been achieved without taking officers from other community policing assignments in DC's neighborhoods.

① Learn more about the latest results of photo radar in DC at:  
[http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speedresults\\_text.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speedresults_text.shtm)

① DC's automated red-light camera enforcement program is completing its fifth year, with a nearly 70 percent overall reduction in red-light running violations over the course of the program at the 39 intersections equipped with cameras. Details at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/redlight.shtm>

## LAST "WAVE" OF SMOOTH OPERATOR 2004 KICKS OFF

Maybe you have heard one of the radio advertisements or seen a bus billboard, warning motorists about the dangers of aggressive driving. Or maybe you've seen more police officers out writing tickets for traffic offenses such as speeding, running red lights and stop signs, tailgating and making unsafe lane changes. The fact is that this summer not just the MPDC, but law enforcement across the region has been emphasizing the dangers of aggressive driving - and has been backing up that message with action, in the form of tickets. The week of August 22-28 marks the last of four law enforcement "waves" for this year's Smooth Operator program. During that period, MPDC officers will be paying particular attention to a variety of aggressive driving behaviors, as they did during the first three "waves" this summer. During those three weeks, in fact, the MPDC issued more than 41,000 citations for aggressive driving, with the Fourth Police District issuing the most tickets. Since Smooth Operator began in 1997, close to 1 million citations for aggressive driving have been issued by participating law enforcement agencies during the special enforcement waves. The theme for the 2004 Smooth Operator campaign is "Aggressive Driving Is Contagious - Catch It and You're Caught." The 2004 campaign places special emphasis on the heightened risks of aggressive driving around large trucks and buses.

① Get more details on Smooth Operator at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/smoothop.shtm>

① For more traffic safety tips, including details on DC's Distracted Driving Safety Act, go to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/traffic.shtm>

## MPDC RETIRES BADGES OF TWO FALLEN HEROES

Amid the classrooms, gymnasium and other facilities at the Maurice T. Turner Jr., Institute of Police Science in Southwest, the MPDC maintains a special place of honor for members of the Department who have made the ultimate sacrifice. The Wall of Honor houses the badges of MPDC officers who died in the line of duty. Recently, Chief Ramsey and other Department members joined the families of the MPDC's most recent fallen heroes in a ceremony retiring the badges of Sergeants John Ashley and Clifton Rife III. Sergeant Ashley died in the line of duty on May 30, as he collapsed while assisting a young lady in trying to catch her loose dog in Northwest. He was a seven-year veteran of the Department who had just recently been promoted to sergeant and was assigned to the Second District. Sergeant Rife, of the Major Narcotics Branch, was shot and killed on June 2 after he was confronted by an armed robber outside an apartment complex in Oxon Hill, Maryland. Though off-duty at the time, Sergeant Rife managed to draw his service weapon and shoot and kill the offender. The badges of Sergeants Rife and Ashley have joined those of more than 100 other officers who died in the line of duty dating back to 1871. Sergeants Ashley and Rife were the first MPDC officers killed in the line of duty since July 1998.

- ① The MPDC also maintains an online memorial to officers killed in the line of duty at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/heroes/officers/officers.shtm>
- ① Fellow officers, friends and residents are invited to submit their personal remembrances of officers who have died in the line of duty by going to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/heroes/memory/remembrance.shtm>

## SUMMER BASKETBALL IN 3D TEACHES MORE THAN JUST HOOPS

For years, police departments and recreational agencies have used basketball as a way to get young people off the streets and into a constructive activity. This summer, officials in the Third District have taken that concept one step further. The district's Youth NBA Summer Basketball League provided not only exercise and competition for young people in the Northwest neighborhood near the Parkview Recreation Center. It also created an opportunity for 3D officers, parks employees and community volunteers to reach out to the young people in the league. Through workshops and one-on-one mentoring, these adults were able to impart valuable skills and life lessons to young people from the neighborhood who might not otherwise have had the benefit of either structured activities or adult guidance this summer. Third District officials report that many of young participants may have chosen to stay out of trouble so that they would not miss a game. Their time was occupied from 6 pm to 10 pm, five and six nights a week. Afterwards, they were too tired to hang out in the streets. And over the long term, officials hope that the young people will be better equipped to make positive decisions about their lives.

- ① Read more about this neighborhood partnership success story at:  
[http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/3rd/ss\\_3D\\_bbal04.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/3rd/ss_3D_bbal04.shtm)

## NEWS & NOTES

**New "PSA Finder" Feature.** The MPDC has teamed up with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to create a new feature through the MPDC website that allows residents to easily identify their Police Service Area (or PSA). Through OCTO's "DC Guide," visitors can enter their address and bring up not only their PSA, but also a wide range of resources in their neighborhood. With the recent realignment of the PSA boundaries, this feature should be particularly valuable to residents who may not be familiar with their new PSA. To access the feature, click on the "DC Guide" link on <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/districts.shtm>.

**Recent Court Reports.** Each month, members of the US Attorney's Office Community Prosecution Team publish a prosecution update for the police district to which they're assigned. These "court reports" provide general summary information about recent court cases. View the most recent reports at [http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/dc/Community\\_Prosecution/Court\\_Reports/index.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/dc/Community_Prosecution/Court_Reports/index.html).

**Chief Ramsey on WOL Radio.** Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues and takes phone calls from 5-6 pm, on Wednesday, August 25, during his monthly appearance on the "Live at Five" program on WOL-1450 AM.

### DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 8/20/04)

- 2004: 119
- 2003: 165
- % Change: -27.9%
- Closure Rate: 54.6% (65 closures)

Adult Arrests (week end. 8/14/04)

- Total: 980
- Drugs: 153
- Weapons: 12
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 17
- Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 40

Firearm Recoveries (as of 8/18/04)

- August: 75
- 2004 Total: 1,276

Traffic Fatalities (as of 8/20/04)

- 2004: 34
- 2003: 45
- % Change: -25.5%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at [kevin.morison@dc.gov](mailto:kevin.morison@dc.gov). Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

**mpdc.dc.gov**